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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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UNITED STATES DEPT. OF COMMERCE
NOAA
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Happy 20th Birthday!

Inside Commerce

By Niki Tillery

Marilyn G. Wagner has been named senior counsel to the general counsel in the Office of the General Counsel. This is a new position. Wagner is the former assistant general counsel for administration.

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Jean M. Prewitt is the new chief counsel of NTIA. Henry P. Misisco, former director of the Office of Trade and Investment Analysis, is the new director of the Office of Automotive Industry.

Olivia K. Alladice, a personnel generalist with NOAA's Central Administrative Support Center in Kansas City, Mo., was named Woman of the Year by members of the local chapter of the American Business Women's Association. Alladice has been a NOAA employee since 1974.

Census Bureau Deputy Director Louis Kincannon explains the functions of part of an early relic of data tabulation to visitors Herman Hollerith III and IV. It was their forefather, Herman Hollerith, who invented the punchcard data tabulation machine for use in the census of 1890. Such machines were used for several censuses.

Syukuro Manabe, a NOAA scientist at the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, N.J., has been elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his distinguished and continuing achievements in science research. Manabe becomes one of 1,601 members of the private organization dedicated to the furtherance of science.

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John R. Hunter, a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) scientist with the Southwest Fisheries Center in La Jolla, Calif., has been selected by the San Diego Ocean Foundation as the 1990 winner of the Roger Revelle Perpetual Award. He was honored for his research on fishes of the San Diego area.

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Miles E. Smid, a supervisory mathematician in NIST's National Computer Systems Laboratory, was honored by the Interagency Committee on Information Resources Management (IAC/IRM). Smid received the committee's 1990 Award for Technical Excellence for his outstanding contributions to the federal information resources community, particularly in the computer security field.

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Census Bureau's Vestah Blye retired in June after 43 years of service. Although the Morgan State University graduate started with the War Department, most of her time has been with Census. One of her favorite retirement gifts: an autographed picture of actor Kirk Douglas, a high school classmate in Amsterdam, N.Y.

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Margaret Caswell of NOAA's Central Administrative Support Center in Kansas City, Mo., received a Department of Defense certificate of appreciation for support of the Naval Reserve. Cmdr. Michael O'Dell, right, presented the award on behalf of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, as Robert Fightmaster looks on.

The Office of Procurement and Administrative Services (OPAS) held its first annual awards program June 7 to recognize outstanding contributions made by wage system and contractor employees. Assistant Secretary for Administration Tom Collamore presented individual awards to Thomas P. Baron, locksmith, Office of the Secretary, and Brian E. Heneghan, electrician aide, Office of Federal Property Programs. A group award was presented to Edwin L. Hawkins, Alonzo Simmons and James A. Warren, bindery machine operators in the Office of Publications. Certificates of appreciation were presented to Lt. Horace Austin of Securiguard, Inc., and the Scheduled Airline Ticket Office (SATO) at the Hoover building.

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Two Northeast Fisheries Center scientists, Fredric M. Serchuk and Kevin D. Friedland, were elected to leadership positions in the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Serchuk, chief of the Center's New England Offshore Fishery Resources Investigation, was elected to a three-year term as chairman of ICES's Advisory Committee on Fishery Management. Friedland, a fishery research biologist with the Center's Coastal and Estuarine Fishery Resources Investigation, was elected to a three-year term as Chairman of ICES's Atlantic Salmon Working Group. ICES is an 88-year-old, treaty-based organization which coordinates research in the Northeast Atlantic, and provides advice to various national and international organizations involved in fisheries management

NOAA Turns 20 In October

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), one of Commerce's largest agencies, celebrates its 20th birthday Oct. 3.

NOAA is home to the National Weather Service; National Ocean Service; National Marine Fisheries Service; National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service; Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; and the National Sea Grant and Undersea Research Programs. It has its own fleet and air arm, and the nation's smallest uniformed service — the 400-officer NOAA Corps.

NOAA was created in 1970 to provide "better protection of life and property from natural hazards and a better understanding of the total environment."

John A. Knauss, under secretary for oceans and atmosphere, said the agency's first 20 years have been marked by solid achievement.

For the past 20 years, NOAA's more than 12,000 men and women have carried out a wide variety of environmental science and service, ranging from weather forecasting to mapping and charting the seas and skies, guiding the use and protection of the coastal ocean and its resources, and conducting research literally from the sea floor to the sun.

NOAA's National Hurricane Center anticipates storms and warns those affected of their approach. In the Arctic, NOAA fights to free grey whales trapped in the ice off Alaska. NOAA protects marine mammals such as dolphins, seals and sea turtles throughout U.S.-administered waters.

Normally, NOAA's work takes a less spectacular form, such as warning when the sun enters a cycle of violent activity, taking environmental polluters to court for pollution damages, and devising an inexpensive system to warn of tsunamis, or Pacific Ocean tidal waves, for less-developed nations.

"NOAA weather forecasting is good and getting better," said Knauss. "Within this decade we will have a 21st century service."

NOAA's scientists are closing in on the ability to predict the potentially most devastating weather event on the planet — El Nino, an abrupt warming of South America's Pacific coastal waters.

"Our satellite services, providing quick-look information on weather and ocean conditions, now embody a search-and-rescue ability which has saved nearly 1,500 lives," Knauss said.

"The first 20 years may have been the warmup for a bigger challenge," says Knauss. "NOAA today faces an era of supercharged environmental demands.

"We must first help meet such basic human needs as safety from the elements, clean air and water, healthy coastal zones and oceans, and wholesome and abundant seafood. Beyond that, we must learn much more about the condition and changes of our seas and skies, and use our new understanding to improve the safety and quality of American life."

Intensified activity is already under way in four vital areas: global and climate change, the health of the coastal oceans and their marine resources, sweeping modernization of NOAA's weather services, and improve storing of environmental data.

The past 20 years, even with the handicap of ageing equipment, have brought major improvement in extended weather forecasts. Today's 6-day and 10-day forecasts are as accurate as the 2-day and 3-day forecasts of 1970. A major breakthrough has been the ability to forecast "mesoscale" or small-area weather events, which cause more death and destruction than bigger and more spectacular storms.

Since 1970, NOAA's 24 operational satellites have traveled more than 10 billion miles in orbit. The advent of the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) in 1974 revolutionized weather forecasting. It let U.S. forecasters continuously monitor the development of severe land storms, Atlantic hurricanes and strong Pacific jet streams, all at the same time.

Improved hurricane, snowstorm, severe thunderstorm and flash flood forecasts have saved the nation billions of dollars. Since 1974, GOES satellites have taken more than 530,000 pictures, collecting information on rainfall, stream levels, and wave heights. Special GOES sensors continually monitor high-energy particles and X-rays emitted from solar flares, warning of impending magnetic storms.

In recent months, NOAA authorities have stepped up enforcement of the law requiring that shrimp fishermen use turtle excluder devices (TED) that allow endangered sea turtles to escape from their nets.

NOAA scientists are mapping thousands of miles of the ocean floor to open earth's last, and toughest, frontier.

The agency also administers the nation's 200-mile Fishery Management and Conservation Zone, in which American fishermen are taking increasing shares of the catch.

In 1989, U.S. consumption of seafood rose to a record 15.9 pounds. NOAA and the Food and Drug Administration plan to inaugurate a voluntary inspection service which will ensure that consumers get healthy fish and shellfish.

NOAA's Climate Analysis Center Monitors Global Weather Conditions

By Joyce Hughes

Flooding in Louisiana, Florida and Cuba. Drought in Mexico. Pacific Coast storms. Hurricanes in French Polynesia. These were only some of the extraordinary climate and weather conditions caused by the 1983 eruption of the El Nino phenomenon, a periodic upheaval of nature which had long puzzled scientists. But thanks to NOAA's Climate Analysis Center (CAC), which was in its fourth year in 1983, the mystery has begun to unravel.

Located in Camp Springs, Md., this National Weather Service center is one of NOAA's outstanding applied science achievements of the past 20 years. Continuously monitoring global conditions leading to events like El Nino, an abrupt warming of South America's Pacific coastal waters causing climate fluctuations and catastrophic weather, is one of CAC's missions. The center is one of the department's key players in monitoring world agricultural markets and energy needs via climate data and forecast supports.

CAC has taken the lead within the U.S. government in operational climate monitoring, analysis, and prediction activities. The office assists federal and civilian agencies as well as foreign countries with climate-related problems affecting food supply, energy allocation and water resources.

The CAC accomplishes this by maintaining a continuous watch on short-term climate fluctuations, diagnosing and predicting them, and by monitoring long-term climate trends. A number of accomplishments led to its international prominence.

The "Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin," produced in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides vital weather and crop growing data to 1,500 subscribers in the United States and abroad, including major U.S. agricultural interests. A "Climate Diagnostics Bulletin" monitors El Nino. Climate data bases maintained at the center compare seasonal temperatures for regions throughout the world and are used by other countries for climate studies and prediction.

Using data collected by NOAA's polar-orbiting TIROS weather satellites, the Sea Surface Temperature Data Center monitors sea surface temperatures in the tropics on a daily basis, in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization's Tropical Ocean/Global Atmosphere (TOGA) program.

Because the ocean and the atmosphere are interactive and interdependent, the CAC has begun adapting atmospheric models used in numerical weather prediction to a process called "ocean diagnostic modeling."

David R. Rodenhuis, director of NOAA's Climate Analysis Center, which has the lead within the U.S. government for various operational climate monitoring and prediction activities. Rodenhuis came to the Weather Service in 1985 from the University of Maryland, where he was an associate professor of meteorology.

Numerical weather prediction is a mathematical process in which equations representing atmospheric conditions are solved on high-speed computers to produce weather forecasts. Oceanographers use these diagnostic models to predict conditions and movement in the world's oceans, which cover three-fourths of the earth and strongly influence global weather patterns.

Scientists in the CAC's Precipitation Data Center use data from cloud-observing Japanese, European and NOAA geostationary satellites to make precipitation estimates for the tropical belt. No longer considered a research project, this work is now done routinely, on an operational basis.

There have been significant improvements in climate prediction since the center began its work. The Prediction Branch produces 6-to-10-day forecasts, monthly outlooks and 90-day seasonal outlooks which are updated every 30 days.

Said David Rodenhuis, director of the Climate Analysis Center: "The CAC has made significant strides in monitoring and predicting global climate, not only because of its scientific implications, but for its enormous practical and economic consequences. Its forecasts play a vital role in energy supply planning."

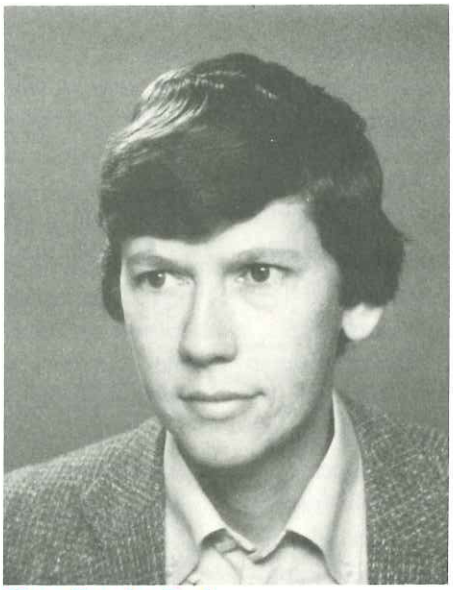
Van den Dool Heads Prediction Branch At National Meteorological Center

By Tamela Graham

Huug Van den Dool, former research scientist at the University of Maryland, is the new chief of the Prediction Branch of the Climate Analysis Center at NOAA's National Meteorological Center (NMC) in Camp Springs, Md.

Van den Dool assumed the one year appointment in April. He replaces Donald Gilman, who retired in June 1989. Said David Rodenhuis, director of the Climate Analysis Center: "Van den Dool's leadership will bring real credit to the National Weather Service and the NMC."

The Prediction Branch produces three different extended weather and climate forecasts: a 6- to 10-day outlook, a monthly outlook and a seasonal outlook. The branch also develops new methods for improving climate prediction, using both empirical and numerical models.


Huug Van den Dool

Numerical weather prediction is a process by which equations representing atmospheric conditions are solved on high-speed computers. These data are used to generate long and short range forecasts. A current project called Dynamic Extended Range Forecasting (DERF) will use numerical methods to improve monthly forecasts.

Van den Dool received degrees equivalent to a bachelor's and a master's in physics and mathematics at the University of Utrecht in Holland. In 1975 he received his Ph.D. in physics and mathematics with a speciality in dynamic meteorology, also from Utrecht.

NTIA Employees Travel Around The World In 80 Days

Like Phineas Fogg, John Smilley and Frank Sanders of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences (ITS) in Boulder, Colo., spent about 80 days this summer circumnavigating the globe. The two made measurements on navy communications systems worldwide to reduce interference threats.

First stop: Adak, Alaska.

Next stop: Edzell, Scotland. *Then:* Winter Harbor, Maine; the Pacific island of Guam; followed by Diego Garcia, a U.S. naval base on a coral atoll in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia was the most distant stop from Smilley's and Sanders' homes in Boulder.

John Smilley

Frank Sanders

The globe-circling measurement program for the navy was born when Smilley and others correctly diagnosed a difficult interference problem that the navy was having with their radar systems on Guam.

Smilley found some surplus filters in a bone yard in Oklahoma and had them shipped to Guam the same day. Once installed, the filters saved the Naval Research Lab tens of thousands of dollars and solved the interference problem.

It's easy to understand why any agency would like a repeat performance of that success story. So ITS was contracted to make measurements of potential interference problems to other navy systems around the world.

NOAA Looks Forward To The Electronic Charting Age Of The 21st Century

By Brian Gorman

As we approach the 21st century, experts in NOAA's charting division are exploring the many ways that modern electronics can eventually replace thousands of copies of paper charts that NOAA's National Ocean Service produces each year.

The benefits will be enormous. Today, for example, a fishing boat captain relying on paper charts to return to port at night or in bad weather must plot a course with parallel rules and dividers, tools his grandfather used. He must note the water depth on the chart and calculate how much water he'll have under his keel. He also must constantly monitor a radar screen to track the location and movement of other vessels, perhaps as many as a dozen.

On ships that have already entered the electronic era, what the captain does seems to have more in common with a Nintendo game than plotting a course. He looks not at a paper chart but a television monitor which displays, at the touch of a computer key, the exact position of his vessel, its compass direction, distance it has traveled, and the estimated time of arrival at its next navigation point.

The concept of electronic charts is more than 20 years old, but the first commercial computer models did not appear until about six years ago. With some systems costing more than $100,000, there are now dozens of models available, with full-color monitors, digital chart displays that duplicate paper charts in exact detail, and fully integrated, high-resolution radar and satellite navigation positioning.

Ironically, electronic marine charting is the direct beneficiary of technical developments in home entertainment and the automotive and aviation industries. A number of new airplanes use electronic displays, and the home entertainment industry's high definition television displays, compact discs and micro-computers all have marine applications.

Many of the features being added to electronic charts may ultimately come from, or at least be originated by, NOAA. These include conventional navigation information, instantaneous information on wind speed and direction, local tides and water heights, and currents. Such information could one day be provided by satellite broadcast from local on-shore broadcast stations.

Other information, unrelated to navigation, but of use to fishermen, could also be incorporated into electronic charts. This includes oceanographic data like deep-water depths, temperature, and salinity.

None of this is likely to happen soon. In addition to high costs to develop and manufacture software, there doesn't yet seem to be a ready market for high-volume sales, a requirement to bring prices down. Moreover, because charts in general and NOAA's charts in particular are so crucial to safety and thus legal liability, international standards must be developed for electronic charts to be widely accepted.

Experts in NOAA's charting division are exploring ways that modern electronics can eventually replace thousands of copies of paper charts the National Ocean Service produces yearly.

It's almost certain, however that in NOAA's next 20 years much of the data that is collected on weather, tides, the ocean, fish, and the coast will find its way into computer software that will show up on TV screens on America's waterways. Paper charts may not yet be in danger of being replaced by TV, but that time will inevitably come.

NMFS Scientists Explore Ways Tuna Vessels Can Reduce Dolphin Deaths

By Roddy Moscoso

Even though consumers will soon be able to buy "dolphin-safe" canned tuna fish, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) continues to look for ways by which the numbers of dolphins killed in tuna fishing can be further reduced.

Because of the recent decisions by Starkist, Chicken of the Sea, and Bumble Bee brands to no longer market tuna that has been caught by methods that kill dolphins, attention is turning to foreign vessels which harvest tuna in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) Ocean.

There has been concern that foreign ships kill perhaps three times as many dolphins as U.S. fishing vessels. Under authority granted by Congress, NOAA published new regulations on tuna imports last year that require foreign tuna fleets to have a dolphin mortality rate no higher than 1.25 times that of the U.S. fleet. The regulations go into effect this year.

The new rules require that foreign fleets be governed by a regulatory program, including observers and enforcement, comparable to that of this country. Any nation not complying will be banned from exporting tuna to the United States.

NMFS scientists, based in La Jolla, Calif., are continuing research both at sea and in the laboratory to develop techniques for fishing that do not involve dolphins.

They have identified several alternatives to the use of purse seine nets, which also encircle dolphins when they are set for tuna. The scientists have also outlined the research necessary to evaluate these methods, none of which the industry has so far accepted as a replacement to purse seining.

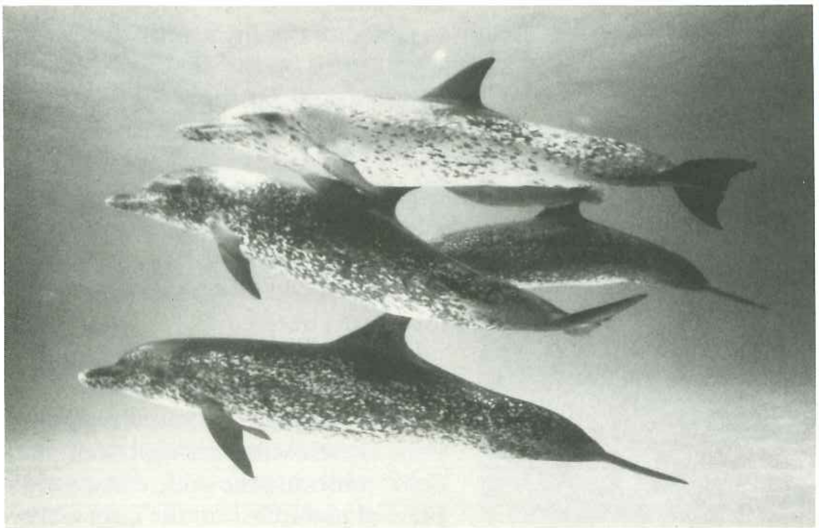
In addition, The National Academy of Sciences is conducting its own study on alternative fishing gear and will soon publish its report.

NMFS observers have reported that in recent years most U.S. fishermen are harvesting tuna in a manner that keeps the number of dolphins killed at the lowest possible level. The latest observer data shows that more than 99 percent of captured dolphins are released alive, and that about 59 percent of all observed net sets result in zero deaths.

The NOAA Fisheries observer program has been in operation since 1976. The program, which put biological observers on tuna boats to monitor the effects of fishing on dolphins and the overall marine environment, resulted in techniques that lowered reported dolphin deaths from 78,000 annually in 1976 to 31,150 in 1980.

The reduction was dramatic, considering the average estimated yearly dolphin mortality in the 1970s was 363,900. In 1980, the U.S. fleet's yearly quota for mortality was set at 20,500, where it still remains.

It was an NMFS scientist at La Jolla laboratory who first published information about the large numbers of dolphins killed by purse seining for yellowfin tuna in the ETP. Research started immediately on modifications and improvements to fishing gear in order to reduce the number of deaths.



Since 1980, dolphins deaths have reduced dramatically. NMFS scientists continue to look for ways by which the number of dolphins killed in tuna fishing can be even further lowered.

NOAA Corps Officers Promote Glasnost At Sea

By Dane Konop

Job diversity has long been recognized as a mainstay and principal attraction to service in the NOAA Corps, the smallest of the seven U.S. uniformed services. The 400 men and women of the NOAA Corps serve in every area of NOAA operations on land, at sea, and in the air.

In a career spanning NOAA's past two decades, a NOAA Corps officer's resume could include flights into the eye of a hurricane, surveys of fish and marine mammals, environmental satellite operations, scuba dives in hazardous waters, engineering field work, sea duty aboard a coastal mapping vessel or a deepwater research ship, and office work at a variety of NOAA facilities across the country.

But perhaps no assignment has been as unique as the recent service of four NOAA Corps officers aboard the Soviet tall ship **Druzhba**, during the first-ever joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. maritime training cruise.

Druzhba set sail from the Black Sea port of Odessa June 10 with 70 Soviet sea cadets, plus 40 American teen-agers, most of them cadets from a variety of U.S. maritime academies, and eight American instructors–a former U.S. Coast Guard sailing master, a maritime teacher from Texas A&M University, a professional merchant mariner, and the four NOAA Corps officers.

The cruise was organized by an array of private sector groups such as the Tall Ship Foundation and Deepwater Alliance, and backed by voluntary contributions from a number of companies.

On the ship's initial leg through the Black Sea, the divisions of language and culture separated the Americans and Soviets just as distinctly as the straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles through which they passed separate Europe from Asia.

"I have to admit I was a bit apprehensive about this voyage," said Lt. Joanne Flanders.

"I'd never worked with teen-agers before and, of course, I'd never served aboard a Russian ship. But it all worked out better than I ever imagined. After some early uneasiness because we were strangers to each other, it really didn't take long, working and living together in the close quarters of the ship, before we began to perform and think of ourselves as one crew."

Following a port call in exotic Istanbul, **Druzhba** sailed the length of the Mediterranean with stops in Athens and Sueta, Spain. From the Canary Islands off the northwestern coast of Africa, the ship and its now tight crew crossed the Atlantic, arriving in Bermuda on July 25. After conducting sail training while skirting the edges of a hurricane, **Druzhba** arrived to a gala welcome August 4 at its first American port, Baltimore.

As **Druzhba** and its unofficial escort of sail boats and motor yachts made its way up Chesapeake Bay into Baltimore, thousands of cheering spectators packed ten deep along the west wall of the city's inner harbor.

Leaning on the ship's rail 20 feet or so above the pier as a tug gently eased **Druzhba** into its berth, Lt. David Cole appeared calm and relaxed as he neared the end of a most memorable assignment. "I really enjoyed this cruise," he said softly, "a once in a lifetime opportunity–but it was also a lot of hard work."

Then, as he spotted his family waving to him from among the cheering throng, he allowed a slight smile of satisfaction for a job well done, mirroring the pride that clearly beamed upwards from the faces ashore.

*At 365-feet, the three-masted, square-rigged **Druzhba**, which means "friendship," is one of the world's largest tall ships, used to train students at the Odessa Maritime Academy.*

*The NOAA Corps officers serving as instructors aboard **Druzhba** were (left to right) Lt. Timothy Wright, Lt. David Cole, Lt. Joanne Flanders, and Lt. Craig McLean.*

Soviet Scientists Visit Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Alaska Fisheries Science Director William Aron, left, with Soviet scientists Marina Raklistova and Valery Paschenko.

By Richard Bakkala

Two Soviet scientists, Valery Paschenko and Marina Raklistova, visited the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) in Seattle June 15 to July 17 to study methods for analyzing groundfish survey data.

Paschenko and Raklistova were part of a cooperative survey conducted by the AFSC, a NOAA agency, and the Soviet fisheries agency TINRO to sample crab and groundfish species in U.S. and U.S.S.R. waters in the Bering Sea.

The survey, conducted aboard the Soviet research vessel Novokotovsk, is the first systematic assessment of groundfish in U.S. and Soviet waters. It will have major importance for understanding the distribution, abundance, and stock structure of groundfish species across the U.S.-U.S.S.R. convention line, which separates the two nation's 200-mile fishery zones.

Raklistova, a specialist in ichthyological studies and ageing of fish, compared TINRO's methods of determining the ages of walleye pollock with those used by the AFSC in order to better standardize the two agencies' fish ageing techniques. Her participation in the cooperative cruise aboard the Novokotovsk was her first time working aboard vessels operating in U.S. waters.

Paschenko has broad experience working aboard Soviet research vessels in U.S. waters. He has conducted cooperative U.S.-U.S.S.R. ichthyoplankton and trawl surveys of pelagic and demersal fish species from California to the Bering Sea since 1970.

Two NOAA Centers Help Navigate Around The World Yacht Race

By J.S. McDowell

The Navy/NOAA Joint Ice Center (JIC) and NOAA's SARSAT Mission Control Center (MCC) are helping contestants in the BOC Group single-handed yacht race navigate safely as they sail around the world. This year's race has competitors from 10 nations. The race is sponsored by BOC, formerly known as British Oxygen Co. The organizers asked NOAA to ensure safe navigation of the competitors.

Inspiration for the 27,000-mile race was Joshua Slocum, an American who in 1898 was the first person to circumnavigate the globe single-handed. Slocum's voyage took more than three years. Today's record is 135 days, set by Philippe Jeantot during the 1986-87 BOC race.

There are four legs to the race. The first, starting Sept. 15, is from Newport, R.I., to Cape Town, South Africa. From there the sailors head to Sydney, Australia. Then the course leads around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America to Punta del Este, Uruguay. The final leg sails back to Newport.

Most dangerous leg is between Sydney and Punta del Este. The route around Cape Horn is known for rough weather and ice. The Joint Ice Center will provide the race organizers with weekly ice charts so the sailboats can avoid treacherous sea ice.

Each boat will carry an Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and an ARGOS beacon. Should a boat get into trouble and need assistance, the sailor can activate the EPIRB, which begins transmitting a distress signal. The signal is relayed to NOAA's MCC in Suitland, Md., by a NOAA TIROS-N series satellite. The nearest Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) will be notified and a rescue mission launched.

Portions of the remote course the boats follow will take them into areas that are out of range of any RCC. For these areas the armada of racers will be responsible for each other. Using the ARGOS beacons, each yacht will be tracked so the nearest boat can be notified to assist the vessel in distress.

OIG Employees Encounter The Unusual During Census Count Of Homeless

By Mort Schwartz

While Census enumerators counted the homeless, four Office of Inspector General employees followed close behind. Sharon Garner, Fred Koppenhafer, Dave Monahan, and Mort Schwartz volunteered to observe census district office operations during what was called the "S" night count of people living in shelters or on the streets of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Md., and suburbs.

On a night of snow showers and cold wind last winter, the intrepid foursome helped search all-night coffee shops, steam grates, abandoned buildings, park benches, cars, and under bridges to find and count the homeless.

Koppenhafer followed the activities of the northern D.C. census office as it struggled to cope with overcrowded shelters and too few enumerators tried to watch full time all the abandoned buildings that might contain people seeking shelter from the bitter weather conditions.

An active supporter and former board member of one of the largest feeding programs for the homeless in the metropolitan area, Koppenhafer transformed himself from observer to enumerator whenever the situation warranted his help.

After several hours in a men's shelter in Baltimore, Sharon Garner found her feelings shifting from unease and even fear to concern and sympathy for the 155 occupants, men who only wanted a warm place to sleep.

In Arlington, Va., Dave Monahan saw some interesting events even before the census count began. One enumerator was fired because he concealed that he was a newspaper reporter. Another enumerator, recruited from an outpatient facility for mental patients, resigned and tried to renounce his U.S. citizenship because he didn't agree with the goals of the decennial census.

Mort Schwartz worked with a determined volunteer from a local homeless feeding program in Montgomery County, Md., who found two men living in the remains of an abandoned car in the back of a vacant parking lot. In the back of another parking lot they found two other occupied cars.

Overall, the OIG employees were impressed with the effort made by the Census Bureau to count the homeless. However, the cold weather, concern for the safety of the enumerators, and inability to monitor every possible structure where the homeless might seek shelter made it impossible to count everyone.

Arguments over this year's homeless count may go on for a while, but those who participated in the count will remember that night even longer.

Former Commerce Employee Sentenced For Overtime Fraud

Paul Harris, a former employee of the Patent and Trademark Office, was sentenced in U.S. District Court, Alexandria, Va., to six months in jail for overtime fraud as a result of an investigation by the department's Office of Inspector General. The sentence also included two years of supervised probation and a $250 special assessment. Harris was ordered to make restitution of approximately $4,000.

Harris was found guilty in May 1990 on all five counts of his indictment. The indictment charged him with padding overtime claims from July, 1988, to March, 1989, while working as a patent classifying technician. The court found he was paid more than $3,700 for overtime he didn't work. Harris' employment at PTO has been terminated.

The investigation was conducted by special agents in the OIG's Washington regional office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul Cassell and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Geoffrey R. Brigham prosecuted the case.

Consumer Corner: Dialing 900 Numbers

Q. After receiving a postcard saying I'd won a prize, I called the 900 number listed on the card to claim my winnings. Not only did I not get the prize, I had to listen to a lot of directions before I could even leave my name and winning number. This left me with a bill well over $10 and nothing to show for it! What can I do?

A. First, write to the company to ask them to refund the charges. You can also contact your phone company to ask them to remove the charges, although they aren't required to do so. If neither the 900 company nor the phone company will remove the charges, be aware that the 900 number company might report the matter to a collection agency and affect your credit record if you refuse to pay the bill. Also report the problem to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Federal Trade Commission. These 900 companies pitch anything from free gifts to talk lines, credit cards, and job opportunities. Recognize that you pay for all 900 (long distance) and 976 (local) calls. Deal only with companies which state the total cost of your call up front — both the charge per minute and the length of the call. Examine your bill carefully and contact the 900 number company as well as your phone company immediately about any charges you dispute. If you have children at home, make sure that they understand that consumers pay for 900 number calls and that they know your rules regarding their use.

Q. I would like to purchase household products which do not damage the environment. What guidelines can I used to select appropriate products?

A. Regardless of the claims you may hear, most products produce some type of damage to the environment through the manufacturing, use, and/or disposal of the product. The key is for the consumer to find products which do less harm to the environment than others. Companies can reduce the harm to the environment by recycling materials and containers, using alternative energy and waste reduction methods in production, reducing pollutants during manufacturing, and switching to less toxic materials. There are publications which help you find companies that are taking measures to make their products environmentally friendly. Among them is 'The Green Consumer,' by Elkington, Hailes, and Makower. It discusses a variety of environmentally friendly products. Published by Penguin Press, the book is $9.95 and is available is bookstores and libraries.

SPORTS CORNER

The U.S. EXPORTERS, a softball team with current and former Commerce Department employees, are the 1990 division champions of the D.C. Department of Recreation and Parks Co-ed Softball League. The team placed second in a city-wide co-ed softball tournament.

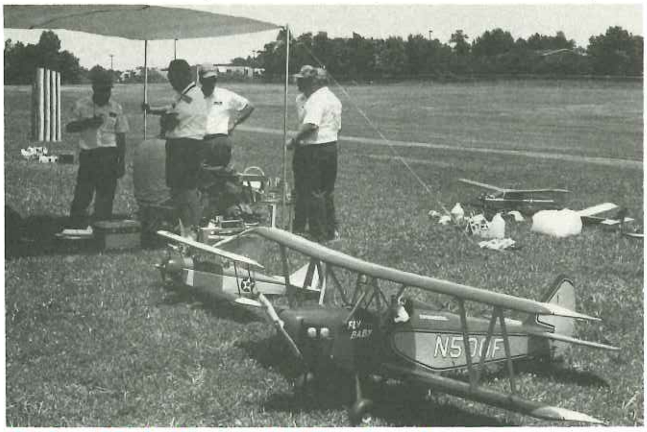
Managed by BXA's Jay Hatfield, the team defended its 1989 championship against many of the finest competitive softball teams in the Washington, D.C., area. Commerce players on the roster include: Jeff Laxague, Anne Driscoll, Laura Zeiger, Linda Powers, Mary Pat Michel and Jody Bankins.

Team members who previously worked at Commerce include: Nick Tolerico, Judy Nehring, Mark Jenkins, Ann Simeone, Neal Stine and Jim Foti. Kathy and Del Peterson, Dan Diller, Bill Ballway, Karyn Buckley, and Lisa Hurst also contributed to the team's most successful season ever. The U.S. Exporters are now preparing for the Congressional League playoffs later this month.

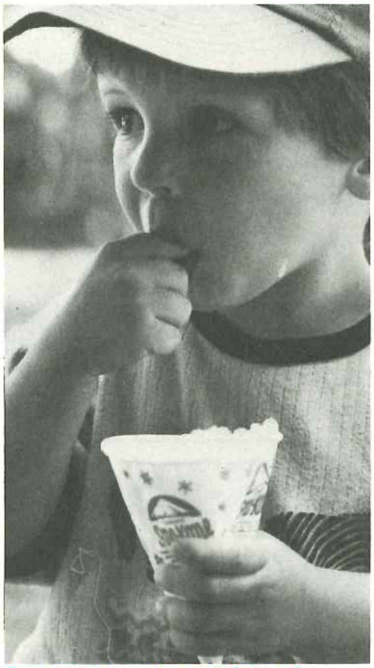
Reenie Parris, left, and Dawna Whitworth cooked about 800 hot dogs for more than 600 picnickers.

Employees' children enjoyed an afternoon of participation and entertainment from the Middle Earth Studio's storytellers.

NIST Serves Up Food And Fun At Employee Picnic



On June 23, the Virginia Air Show Squadron put on an outstanding show at the National Institute of Standards and Technology annual picnic sponsored by the Standards Employees Benefit Association.



Snow cones, cotton candy, and popcorn were only a few of the "eats" that Andrew Udovic could have relished.

Mark Kuklewicz and his son, Andrew, won a compact disc player, one of the door prizes donated by the COMSTAR Credit Union and SEBA.

Of course, what picnic could be complete without the inevitable moon bounce?

Sylvia Appleby spent her afternoon cheerfully serving drinks to quench hot, sunny day thirsts.

Secretary Sets Record Straight On Furlough Situation

Rumors about possible furloughs of Commerce employees ran through the Hoover Building corridors during August. On Aug. 22, in an "all employees" memo, Secretary Mosbacher set the record straight. Here is the text:

"We are approaching the beginning of a new fiscal year with the prospect of a very large federal budget deficit. If the administration and congress are not able to reach agreement before we enter the new year, it is likely that in order to reduce spending to an acceptable level under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, we will be forced into deep budget cuts beginning Oct.1.

"The law requires that these reductions apply to all programs, projects, and activities across the board. I am deeply concerned about the damaging effects extensive cuts will have on our missions, which are so far-reaching and critical to so many, but I am even more concerned about the serious personal toll such reductions may take on all of our employees.

"Still, we must prepare for the eventuality of furloughs, in case the budget deficit negotiations are not resolved in time. Consequently, you may soon receive official notice of the possibility of furlough. This is a required notice, and does not mean that furloughs will definitely happen. I sincerely hope such drastic measures will prove to be unnecessary.

"I thank you for your continued support and dedication to public service at a time when personal sacrifice may be required of you. You may be assured that I will do everything possible to minimize the injury to the department and all of our employees, should severe budget restrictions become unavoidable."

Child Care Center To Sponsor Art Show and Auction

The Commerce Department Child Care Center, Inc. is planning a charity art show and auction on Saturday, Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Hoover Building cafeteria.

The event will be presented by the Heisman Fine Arts Gallery of Ardmore, Pa. Works of art will include lithographs, prints, and oils. Much of the proceeds will be used for the Child Care Center's scholarship fund.

For tickets, please contact Lisa Obayashi at 377-1328.

Personnel Dialogue: Night Differential Pay

Q. I normally work a rotating shift schedule which entitles me to night differential pay. Am I entitled to continue to receive the night differential pay while I serve my two weeks of active military duty? If I am entitled and did not receive it, from whom do I request payment?

A. Yes, an employee regularly assigned to a shift for which night differential is payable shall continue to receive the differential for a period of excused paid absence (such as military leave, federal holidays and jury duty), if the paid absence has been officially ordered and approved. For a federal wage system employee, night shift differential is paid when the majority of an employee's regularly scheduled nonovertime work hours fall between 3 p.m. and 8 a.m. For a General Schedule employee, nightwork is regularly scheduled work performed by an employee between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. In fact, discrete codes must be recorded on your time and attendance report to indicate hours within a night differential period. An employee who believes he has not received a payment for which he is entitled, should first discuss the circumstances with his immediate supervisor. Then, if required, the servicing personnel office should be contacted.

Q. I was overpaid because I received a within-grade increase as a GS-12 before it was due. Must I pay?

A. As a GS-12 you have probably had several promotions and several within-grade increases (WGI). You should know that the waiting periods for WGI's between steps 1 through 4 is 52 calendar weeks, between steps 5 through 7, is 104 weeks, and between steps 8 through 10 is 156 calendar weeks. You can keep track of when WGI's are due by inspecting your SF-50's and projecting the next step increase. You have been promoted within GS, so you know that you start at step 1 of the new grade. If you have received a quality step increase (QSI), you should know that the waiting period for your next step increase is set to coincide with your last. If you have moved into a 104 week waiting period on getting the QSI, you should question any WGI received before the time is up. Depending on your promotion history, the length of time you have been employed, and the personnel/pay records you have available to you, it could be difficult to show that you did not have constructive knowledge of an error. The Comptroller General holds the individual responsible for examining and learning to read his/her copies of personnel/pay records. Failing to do so, the employee incurs technical error and a waiver may not be granted.

Q. I know of a GS-7 who just received a waiver of overpayment in a situation that is very similar to that of a GS-14 acquaintance who was denied a waiver. Both of them received within grade increases before they were due. How could one be approved and the other not?

A. Without knowing the facts in each case, we can only guess. In ruling on waiver requests, the Comptroller General applies the standard of what a reasonable person could be expected to know. A GS-14 has received several promotions and within-grades; gotten performance related pay increments; earned overtime, etc. A senior employee should know the rules and regulations affecting pay and promotion, and overtime if applicable. At that grade his/her pay history makes it difficult to argue ignorance as basis for waiver. That is less true of a student or new graduate. Grade and experience notwithstanding, every request for waiver must be supported by a report of investigation. An employee at any grade who has shown to be at fault, will be denied a waiver.

Q. My child has cerebral palsy and I must take him frequently to physical therapy sessions and visits to doctors' offices. I would like to be able to use my sick leave for this purpose, rather than my annual leave. Do the regulations allow me to do this?

A. The Office of Personnel Management's regulations allow the use of sick leave to care for an immediate family member only in cases in which the family member is afflicted with a contagious disease. By definition, a contagious disease is one that may be transmitted from one person to another by direct or indirect contact. Additionally, the disease must be determined by an appropriate medical authority, such as your city or county health department, to require isolation, quarantine or restriction of movement of the patient. As cerebral palsy is not such a disease, it is appropriate for you to use annual leave or leave without pay to care for your child, but not sick leave.

Commerce People

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Letters should be addressed to Niki Tillery, U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 5058, Herbert C. Hoover Building, Washington, D.C. 20230.

News items may be mailed, or phoned in to the editor on FTS 377-4901.

Marci Robinson.....Acting OPA Director
Robert Kaylor ....OPA
Niki Tillery ....Editor

Management Update Series To Begin In October

The Office of Personnel and Civil Rights announces the fourth season of the Management Update Series.

Conducted monthly at no cost to the operating units, it is a series of one-half day lecture courses designed to update and enhance understanding and skills needed for managerial excellence.

The program concept of selected management topics allows managers to attend only those sessions of particular interest to them.

There are nine titles, representing a mix of the current management topics and philosophies. The program runs from 9:30 a.m. until noon.

For more information on the series and other management training opportunities, contact Diana Parker, management training officer, at 377-4534.

Management Training Schedule for 1990-1991

Oct. 10, 1990 From Stress to Happiness — William Nickles

Nov. 8, 1990 The Listening Leader: Using Listening As A Problem Solving Tool — Jeanne Allegra

Dec. 13, 1990 Managing A Culturally Diverse Workforce — Jo Ellen Gray

Jan. 10, 1991 Effective Presentation Skills: Speaking to One or One Thousand — Michael Siegal

Feb. 14, 1991 Effective Delegation Skills — Melvin Greene

March 14, 1991 Managing Written Communication — R. Breck England

April 11, 1991 Ethics in the Public Sector: Whose Responsibility Is It? — Linda Hooper

May 9, 1991 Organizational Interpersonal Communication — Lois Poag

Supervisors And Employees Prepare For Annual Performance Appraisals

Department supervisors and employees on the October – September appraisal cycle should begin preparing for annual performance plans and review position descriptions (PDs).

Approximately four weeks before the start of the appraisal period, supervisors and their employees should be developing written performance plans for the next appraisal period by completing the department's Performance Management Record (CD-396). This entails the development of critical and non-critical elements, objectives, major activities, criteria for evaluation, and assigning weights. These elements, objectives and activities must reflect the duties and responsibilities in the employee's PD. Each employee is entitled to a current and accurate PD. Each supervisor is required to certify that his/her employees' PDs are current and accurate.

To satisfy these requirements, the supervisor and employee review the current PD as the annual performance plan is being prepared. The supervisor completes the Position Certification and Authorization of Performance Plan section of the front page of the form CD-396. The employee acknowledges that the position description was discussed, and that the performance plan was received, by signing the front of the form CD-396.

Performance planning and the annual PD review are integral parts of the performance appraisal process. Supervisors or employees who have questions about this process should contact their personnel offices.

The Back Page: ACT III

Commerce To Host Third Annual Accessible Computer Technology Exhibit

More than 2,000 people are expected to attend the third annual Accessible Computer Technology (ACT) exhibit Oct. 4 at 9 a.m. in the Hoover Building lobby.

Co-sponsored by the Commerce Department and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the day-long exhibit will feature computer and telecommunications equipment designed to meet the needs of users with vision, hearing, or mobility impairments. Computers that talk, telephones that type, and work stations with robotic hands and arms will be on hand.

Other products to be displayed include a wheelchair-accessible work station, braille printers, an electronic personal note taker, speech recognition systems, PC modem's that provide telecommunications-device-for-the-deaf (TDD) capability, closed/open captioning and teleprompting software.

This year's exhibit will be held in conjunction with OPM's 1990 Presidential Awards ceremony for outstanding federal employees with disabilities, which will be in the Commerce auditorium at 10:30 a.m. Last year, former Commerce Department employee Mark Sakaley was awarded the presidential award for his contributions to the department's Handicapped Program Advisor and Partnerships in Education coordinator.

Commerce has a department-wide handicapped program which provides information technology that is accessible to individuals with physical disabilities.

ACT III is open to the public. Sign interpreters for the deaf will be available. For more information, call Marilyn Estep, 487-4766 (voice) or 487-4639 (TDD) or Alan Douglas, 557-6159.